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PSCI 365.01: Public Policy Issues and Analysis

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Syllabus
PSCI 365 Public Policy Issues and Analysis
Prof. Jeffrey D. Greene
Spring 2019: LA 106 at 11 a.m. (T, Th)
University of Montana

TEXTS: *Understanding Public Policy, 15/e*, by Thomas Dye (Main textbook)
Issues for Debate in American Public Policy, 19/e, by CQ Press (*This book contains numerous policy issues that will be discussed in the class*).

COURSE DESCRIPTION.

Public policy is one of the most exciting areas in political science. This course examines the public policy process (i.e. formation, implementation, and evaluation) and examines a broad range of substantive public policies. The course also integrates a variety of basic techniques of analysis and the application of models to help better understand public policy.

The class will be conducted using an informal seminar format rather than a lecture-based format. The structure of the class will be to examine and discuss a major policy area out of the Dye text, which are supplemented by the CQ Reader. Normally, one or two days will be spent on the broader topic using the Dye text and a day will focus on specific areas of the same policy using the CQ Reader. The new CQ Reader does not match up as well as older editions, so many sessions there is not a matching article in the CQ Reader.

Students are expected to have read the material before class and be prepared to discuss the topic. After a short summary of the policy area, questions will be asked for class discussion. Thus, it is critical that students come prepared to talk about policy topics such as health care, welfare, immigration, etc. There are not specific dates assigned for the policies. The class ends with each student presenting a roughly 10 to 15 minute presentation about a policy of their choice.

Primary Objectives

Objective #1: To provide students with a general understanding of substantive public policy and policy analysis by reading and discussing classic and contemporary literature. Students will be exposed to the basic concepts, terms, and methodologies associated with policy studies. In this process, students will gain a general understanding of the history and evolution of policy studies. Students' proficiency will be measured by class discussions (essentially a series of oral exams integrated into class discussions).

Objective #2: To enhance students' ability to write concise reports pertaining to public policy and present their work as an oral presentation. This objective will be accomplished by having students write a 12-page policy summary paper and make a formal, oral presentation about their work to the entire class. Details of these projects are explained later in the syllabus. Students' proficiency will be assessed via their performance on the policy summary paper.

Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

- 1) Demonstrate knowledge of the history and evolution of American public policy
- 2) Demonstrate an understanding of the fundamental models, terms, and concepts associated with public policy and policy studies.
- 3) Demonstrate proficiency at writing concise reports that deal with complex material.

- 4) Demonstrate a thorough understanding of a specific policy by writing a policy summary, which includes an understanding about how issues can be “framed” and how framing issues impacts the potential solutions.
- 5) Demonstrate the ability to make formal presentations about public policy and analysis using visual technology, such as PowerPoint or other presentation software or equipment.

REQUIREMENTS: POLICY SUMMARY PAPER and CLASS PRESENTATIONS

Exams.

There are no formal exams in this course.

Policy Summary Paper.

The policy summary paper is intended to enhance students’ ability to write concise reports and demonstrate a competent understanding of a specific policy area. Students may select any policy area. Simply stated, a policy summary is a concise overview of a real public policy area that could be used as a chapter or section in a report, or as a freestanding report that one might construct for a public agency. Policy summaries should provide an overview of the policy area, include a brief overview of the history and evolution of the policy, the pertinent issues and debates associated with the policy area, and provide alternative solutions currently being considered to solve problems associated with the policy.

Students should select a policy topic of personal interest. All topics must be approved in advance. Students should summarize and evaluate a specific policy. The papers should contain a **clear description of the policy problem, provide the major potential remedies for the policy problem, briefly evaluate the pros and cons of each remedy, and select the remedy they feel would be the best solution to the problem and provide the rationale for selecting this remedy.** Students are encouraged to use some of the models covered in the class to their papers and note "how the public policy has been framed."

Papers are graded using the following criteria: **thoroughness, sophistication of analysis, organization and logical development, clarity of expression, grammar, and overall evaluation.** The format used is a **1** through **5** scale — with **5** the highest score — for each of the criteria.

Thoroughness High quality papers address the subject with sufficient detail to demonstrate that the policy topic is fully understood.

Sophistication of analysis in high quality papers, the author does more than just explain or describe. The author shows evidence of having thought about the subject in depth. The subject is analyzed from many angles and assessed critically.

Organization and logical development High quality papers show evidence of prior planning, as if they had been outlined in advance. The paper has a purpose

that is introduced in the introduction, developed in the paper, and returned to in the conclusion. Paragraphs are well constructed and linked to each other in a logical sequence using transitional sentences. Arguments, examples, opinions, evidence, and details explain the main points and lend credibility to each point being developed.

Clarity of expression In high quality papers, words are chosen carefully and sentences are constructed purposefully so that each point the author makes is expressed as exactly, precisely, and clearly as possible.

Grammar Poor grammar, punctuation, and spelling detract from the substance of papers. High-quality papers are characterized by consistently correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Verbs agree with subjects, there are no single-sentence paragraphs, etc.

To receive an “A”, one must write an **excellent** paper. In short, **excellent** papers explicitly demonstrate an understanding of the relevant terms and concepts, utilize illuminating examples, provide penetrating analysis, are gracefully but succinctly written, and build to clear and compelling conclusions.

Note: Students must write a 10-page, double-spaced, policy summary paper. This is the same topic that will be used in the class presentations.

Class Presentations

The paper, described above, will be converted into a formal, oral presentation using software such as PowerPoint or other visual aids like transparencies, charts, or handouts. Each presentation should be about 10-15 minutes with 5 minutes left for questions. Both the paper and the presentation are required for all students. The final weeks of the class will be dedicated to the presentations.

GRADE WEIGHTS:

Policy Paper40%

Presentations.....40%

Participation.....20% (*Based on the quality of oral participation in class discussions*)

ATTENDANCE: Students are encouraged to attend class. Poor attendance (defined as missing more than five classes) may adversely affect one's final grade.

Spring Break is Monday-Friday, March 25-29

PROFESSOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION:

Professor: Jeffrey Greene

Office: Liberal Arts 352

Telephone: 243-6181

Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

E-mail: jeffrey.greene@umontana.edu

Website: <http://hs.umt.edu/polsci/>

COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS.

Subject, and Assigned Readings (Specific dates are not assigned since some policies will take more than one class period).

Introduction to Public Policy: Models and the Policymaking Process

Introduction (No readings assigned; January 10)

Policy Analysis: What Governments Do, Why They Do It, and What Difference it Makes.

Models of Politics: Some Help in Thinking about Public Policy.

Assigned readings Dye, Chapters 1 through 5 (this section will take about 3 classes)

Criminal Justice: Rationality and Irrationality in Public Policy

Assigned readings Dye, Chapter 6

Sample Policies: “Sentencing Reform” and “Media and Violence” in the CQ Reader.

Health & Welfare Policy and Education Policy

Health and Welfare: The Search for Rational Strategies

Assigned readings: Dye, Chapter 7 and 8

Sample Policies “Sports and Sexual Assault,” and “Medical Marijuana” in the CQ Reader.

Education Policy: The Group Struggle.

Assigned readings Dye, Chapter 9

Sample Policies: “Charter Schools” in the CQ Reader and Discussion about higher education (no readings about higher education).

Economic Policy, Tax Policy, and International Trade and Immigration Policy

Economic Policy: Incrementalism at Work

Assigned Reading: Dye Chapter 10 and paper by Greene on economic policy (Moodle)

Sample Policies: “Immigrants and the Economy,” “Reviving Rural Economies,” and “Universal Basic Income” in the CQ Reader.

Tax Policy: Battling Special Interests

Assigned Readings: Dye, Chapter 11 (No reading in the CQ Reader)

International Trade and Immigration: Elite-Mass Conflict

Assigned Readings: Dye, Chapter 12 and Sample Policies: “U.S. Trade Policy” in the CQ Reader

Environmental Policy, Civil Rights, and some aspects of Foreign Policy

Environmental Policy: Externalities and Interests

Assigned Readings: Dye, Chapter 13

Civil Rights: Elite and Mass Interaction

Assigned Readings: Dye, Chapter 14.

Sample Policies: “Guns on Campus,” and “Affirmative Action and College Admissions,” and “Muslims in America” in the CQ Reader.

Foreign Policy and Defense Policy; and Homeland Security:

Assigned Readings: Dye, Chapter 15 and 16

Sample Policies: “High-Tech Policing,” in the CQ Reader.

Various Social Policies (If time permits) All from the CQ Reader

- 7. Trump Presidency _____
- 9. "Alt-Right" Movement _____
- 10. Trust in Media _____
- 11. Future of the Christian Right _____
- 12. Future of the Democratic Party _____
- 13. Redistricting Showdown _____

Presentations begin on April 2 through April 25 (8 classes)

April 2 Presentations
April 4 Presentations
April 9 Presentations
April 11 Presentations
April 16 Presentations
April 18 Presentations
April 23 Presentations
April 25 Presentations

April 25 Policy Papers due; Upload to Moodle or send by e-mail. Work will be returned by April 30.

Table of Contents for Thomas Dye, 15/e

- 1. Policy Analysis: What Governments Do, Why They Do It, and What Difference It Makes
- 2. Models of Politics: Some Help in Thinking About Public Policy
- 3. The Policymaking Process: Decision-Making Activities
- 4. Policy Evaluation: Finding Out What Happens After a Law Is Passed
- 5. Federalism and State Policies: Institutional Arrangements and Policy Variations
- 6. Criminal Justice: Rationality and Irrationality in Public Policy
- 7. Welfare: The Search for Rational Strategies
- 8. Health Care: Attempting a Rational-Comprehensive Transformation
- 9. Education: Group Struggles
- 10. Economic Policy: Challenging Incrementalism
- 11. Tax Policy: Battling the Special Interests
- 12. International Trade and Immigration: Elite—Mass Conflict
- 13. Energy and the Environment: Externalities and Interests
- 14. Civil Rights: Elite and Mass Interaction
- 15. Defense Policy: Strategies for Serious Games
- 16. Homeland Security: Terrorism and Nondeterrable Threats

Issues for Debate in American Public Policy: Selections from *CQ Researcher*, 19th Edition
CQ Researcher

Table of Contents, 19/e

Business and the Economy

1. Immigrants and the Economy
2. Reviving Rural Economies
3. Universal Basic Income

Rights and Liberties

4. Guns on Campus
5. Affirmative Action and College Admissions
6. Muslims in America

Social Policy

7. Trump Presidency
8. Charter Schools
9. "Alt-Right" Movement
10. Trust in Media
11. Future of the Christian Right
12. Future of the Democratic Party
13. Redistricting Showdown

Health Policy

14. Sports and Sexual Assault
15. Medical Marijuana

National Security

16. High-Tech Policing

Note: The syllabus is currently geared to the 19/e of the CQ Reader. The UC Bookstore will get the most recent edition available.

Note: This is my last semester at UM; I will be retiring at the end of the spring semester.

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